



Put your best face forward at the Madcap Masquerade. Photo Petr Masek

Nightlife BY MIKE LEE, contributing editor

There's a little bit of everything in October. And, believe it or not, nothing written here has anything to do with the Steelers. Except for the fact there's only one home game (Oct. 26) and a bye week, which I believe means that you are legally permitted to at least consider participating in something other than obsessing over the Black and Gold. Besides, nothing listed here conflicts with a game.... You're welcome.

THE BACON BROTHERS: OCT. 9

Actually? They're not bad.... And, I mean that in the most skeptical-of-an-actor-turned-musician kind of way. Hollywood A-lister Kevin Bacon (*A Few Good Men*, *Apollo 13*, *Mystic River*) may be as ubiquitous to American films as any in history, but his big-screen accomplishments shouldn't cast a shadow. The truth is, he and his brother Michael have been lifelong musicians, and since 1995, the Bacon Brothers have released five albums of their brand of country-folk music, which is surprisingly approachable and melodious. Hints of James Taylor and Jimmy Buffett permeate their sound, which I dare say is more virtuosic than the *Footloose* soundtrack. (Palace Theatre, 21 W. Otterman St., Greensburg. 7:30 p.m. \$25-\$45. Tickets: 724/836-8000, thepalacetheatre.org)

Mike's Tip: If you want to hang before or after the show, slip next door to Rialto Café, 25 W. Otterman St., which has a patio. Thursday night always seems to draw a crowd.

BLACK SHEEP PUPPET FESTIVAL KICK-OFF!: OCT. 10

Gallery openings are a great way to ease into a weekend, and few are as enjoyably different as this one. In its 10th year, the Black Sheep Puppet Festival Kick-off! (on 10/10, get it?) is a truly different type of gallery opening, featuring the various hand-made puppetry of local to international artists. It's a great chance to break out of your shell and experience a fascinating performance art beyond the mainstream. Peruse the Brew House space and try your hand (literally) at the art of puppetry, while enjoying complimentary puppet shows, beer and wine. That's not a typo. The Festival, which includes puppet performances, workshops, lectures and demonstrations, runs through Oct. 26. (Brew House, 2100 Mary St., South Side. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 412/381-7767, blacksheep-puppet.com)

Mike's Tip: Make sure you stay for the shadow-puppet performance, "So Close And Yet... So Far," from Taiwanese artist Spica Wobbe. Beautiful.

BILL ENGVALL: OCT. 22

Of the "Blue Collar Comedy" quartet, Engvall may only be the third best-known comedian—but Jeff Foxworthy, Larry the Cable Guy and Ron White are pretty elite company. Well, as elite as a bunch of self-proclaimed "redneck" comics can be. You can't argue with success, though. His "Bill Engvall Show" may not have acquired the appointment television moniker, but Engvall's brand of clean-cut, observational humor hasn't been canceled on TV yet. And his eight solo albums and infinite "Blue Collar" projects keep 'em laughing

all the way to the trailer park. Admit it, like me, you're a closet fan too. Why? I'm not really sure, but "here's your sign." (The Harv Arena at Mountaineer Casino Racetrack & Resort, Route 2, Chester, W.Va. 7:30 p.m. \$20-\$100. Tickets: 412/323-1919, ticketmaster.com)

Mike's Tip: Always double-down against a dealer's 6.

MADCAP MASQUERADE: OCT. 25

In its fourth year, the Madcap Masquerade has become "the" party of the year. It's a mélange of food, drink and entertainment. This year, though, presents a new twist: The Madcap is moving outdoors to beautiful Schenley Plaza, a space funded by events such as this one. Fret not, it'll be a tented event. Every year, Madcap provides a veritable assault on the senses from unique and wacky performances to the show-stopping fashion show, themed "Carousel Couture." It's a magical event like none other, where the costumes (and the *Eyes Wide Shut*-esque masks) are unmatched, the performances just keep coming, and even the most Al Gore of us all find ourselves going Doney Terrio by the end of the night. See? The mask can be functional. This is a can't-miss event presented by UPMC Health Plan to benefit Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. (Schenley Plaza, 4100 Forbes Ave., Oakland. 9 p.m.; VIP 7 p.m. \$50-\$250. Tickets: 412/682-7275, pittsburghparks.org.)

Mike's Tip: Costumeage is extensive and elaborate, and there are some nice prizes to win for your macked-out get-up.

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"INTERVAL" AT AVA LOUNGE

The beat goes on this month at AVA Bar and Lounge, where the Monday-night jazz jam continues with "Interval," an event that features The Interval Trio: Pianist Howie Alexander, bassist Paul Thompson and drummer James Johnson III. The music runs from 8:30 p.m. to 2 a.m. including two sets by The Interval Trio. (126 S. Highland Ave., East Liberty. No cover. Info: 412/363-8277, shadowlounge.net)

Photo courtesy of Jessica Lee



"ENTREPRENEURIAL THURSDAYS": OCT. 2, 9, 16, 23

Vocalist Jessica Lee continues her "Entrepreneurial Thursdays," a business and professional networking event featuring live music by some of Pittsburgh's great jazz and R&B artists. This month's events are at Firewater's Grill, 120 Federal St., North Side, across from PNC Park. A \$10 cover charge includes hors d'oeuvres. (5:30-8 p.m. Info: 412/996-5736, entrepreneurialthursdays.com)

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